

Local company helps 179th CE in desert

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Imagine you are deployed halfway around the globe, temperatures reach 130 degrees, you're supporting wartime operations around the clock and, in what seems like a daily event, the sewer system provided by the host country backs up. Suddenly, about half the restrooms in your compound can't be used, and raw sewage floods the place, baking in the sun and adding an entirely new fragrance to the desert air.

Thirty-two members of the 179th's Civil Engineering Squadron didn't have to imagine this unpleasant scenario; they lived it when recently deployed to support *Operations Southern Watch* and *Enduring Freedom* in Al Dhafra, UAE. "We were literally drowning in sewage," said Major Denise Boyer, deployment commander, "Something had to be done."

Numerous attempts by host nation contractors to repair the system's submerged pumps were leading nowhere. The work was onerous, to say the least, requiring the workers climb down into the sewer system (which, remember, was flooded) to remove the failed pumps. Boyer and Chief Master Sergeant Ken Wolf, the deployed team's facility chief, kept a close eye on the repair teams, but wouldn't let the 179th's members join them because of the health hazards.

At the same time, Boyer and Wolf realized the sanitation hazard wasn't confined to the repair crews; it posed a dire risk for the entire 1000-person team at Al Dhafra. They decided to tackle the problem head-on.

After thinking through and ruling out numerous options they hit on an idea

that only Air National Guard members from Mansfield are likely to discover. As good fortune would have it Boyer and Wolf were acquainted with high-ranking officials at the Gorman-Rupp Pumps Headquarters in Mansfield.

"I served, long ago, as chief draftsman at Gorman-Rupp," Boyer said, and "Chief Wolf worked with and knew many people there for years."

Wolf knew exactly what was needed,

were on hand. Working with the host nation, the 179th's CE team went to work, completing the new lift station in short order.

"We weren't worried about problems in the future," Wolf said, "Gorman-Rupp pumps are the Cadillac of the industry."

The deployed wing commander was so impressed with the 179th's work that he named them team of the month and, later, the deployed support group commander

hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the lift station. Just about everyone on duty at Al Dhafra that day attended, and it wasn't a mandatory formation.

"This is just another example of what the Air National Guard brings to the fight," according to Lt. Col. Jay Williams, 179th Civil Engineering Squadron commander. "We have branches and roots in our communities that enable us to be innovative in ways that many active duty units can't," he said.

The expeditionary wing at Al Dhafra certainly

agrees. In numerous commendations and letters of appreciation, senior officers there praised the 179th's deployed team, calling it the finest civil engineering outfit they'd seen.

"We here at Mansfield have a very close relationship with and receive great support from our local community," said Williams.

"CE installed a centrifugal pump system and we gave it as a gift to the host nation," said Boyer. "However, it's the hometown connection that's really remarkable about this story."

Editor's note: Col. Willis Waldron, support group commander, contributed to this article.



Members of the 179th CES show off their new lift station provided by a local Mansfield company.

and was able to develop all the critical specifications. Rather than replace the submerged pumps, he chose to design a "lift station" configuration, with the pumps above ground. That way, if they failed, they'd be easy to get to and pose much less risk to maintenance personnel.

Taking advantage of Internet email back to the States, Boyer and Wolf were pleasantly surprised to learn there was a Gorman-Rupp distributor only a little more than two hours away from their deployed location. Even better, the distributor had the components that Wolf specified. Air Force funding was arranged and, in a few days, new pumps